



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Milton S. Fox,
1964

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Transcript

Interview

HP: HARLAN PHILLIPS

MF: MILTON FOX

HP: Well, what we're interested in mainly is to collect from people who are participants on the fringe in the various organizations the illuminating things, the atmospheric things, that everybody took for granted and nobody bothered to jot down. It's part of the history, probably in a sense the more exciting part, I think. In personal terms perhaps a rapier way to get at it is what were the alternatives for you in the Thirties? Where were you? What were you doing?

MF: You're speaking to me personally now?

HP: Yes.

MF: Well, actually at the . . . I had been to Europe as a scholarship student from what was called the Cleveland School of Art then; it is now the Cleveland Institute of Art. It's fancied up. And I went over in '25 and '26 as a scholarship student and the scholarship had been for portraiture. I might say, incidentally, I don't know if you're interested in this kind of detail, but you stop me if you're not. I knew nothing about contemporary painting at the time. I was almost completely . . . Are you interested in any of this kind of thing?

HP: It makes all the difference, doesn't it?

MF: I was almost completely ignorant of the people, even the names: Renoir, Van Gogh, Cezanne, and so on. I mean I think of it now with a certain amount of almost anger when I consider that here I was a scholarship student from a not unknown art organization, art school, and our education at the time was such that things that were already thirty, forty, fifty years past were completely a mystery to me.

HP: You were indicating the almost futile preparation you had for modern?

MF: I'm not sure that a great many American painters . . . Well, there were some, of course, but let's put it this way: it wasn't a part of the art education. It's my impression that it was not a part of the art education. I remember perfectly well that I first ran into Seurat when I saw his picture called "The Circus" in the Louvre and I was very fascinated with the idea of anybody sitting down and making all those dots. I didn't realize that painting could be anything like that, you see, and I didn't particularly . . . I mean, I wasn't bowled over; it was a curiosity. And I remember also that I lived on the same street where Gertrude Stein did. Nobody had told me about her at that point either.

HP: Wow!

MF: Just down the street from her, and in those days she was still seeing some pretty important people in modern culture on rue du Fleuries and at the corner on the Boulevard Raspail, there was a store which sold reproductions of one sort and another and often they had a Cezanne, "Boy in the Red Vest" by Cezanne, Cezanne's, which has a three-way arm. It has the upper arm and the lower arm and another piece to connect the two, and I used to stand waiting for the bus and wonder why the hell he ever did it. It was all elongated and distorted. Somehow the picture fascinated me but I didn't like it and I was mystified by it. And when I came back it was 1929 when I met the then Director of the Art School whom I never did like and I'd never hide it, Henry Turner Bailey, at the time when the Cleveland Museum was putting on a big exhibition of Impressionists, 1929. We ran into each other on the streetcar and Mr. Bailey was a gentleman. We talked; he asked me if I had seen the Impressionist Exhibition at the Cleveland Museum, and I said I hadn't yet but I was going to get on it soon. He said, "Well, don't." He had a very phony sort of New England accent. "It's the most damnable painting the world has ever seen. A disgrace!" 1929! And this was Renoir and Cezanne, all of them. Pissarro. At any rate, what with one thing and another, it was kind of rough trying to get started but I did get started as a portrait painter. Then, unfortunately the thing called the Depression came along and as it deepened people learned how to get along without portraits progressively, although I did get my highest price for a portrait along about '32, which was already something. I got \$500 plus my expenses to go out of town . . . to a small town, Galion, Ohio, where they make caskets and road digging machinery. It's kind of appropriate that you have the two together in this one town.

HP: Mmhmm.

MF: I painted the head of one of the big casket companies and I got \$500 and my expenses, which was not bad for those days. So I was getting along. I had done about 150 of these portraits. But most of them, as I think is the case probably still with artists, were jobs for \$25 or \$50, because you think it's a good thing to do if the subject is a person who is well-placed, and has lots of friends and he will tell his friends, and so on. It never worked out, and a lot of people took advantage of it, but at any rate it was something because, as I say, in the early Depression days there were times . . . and even before that, between '28 and '30 when my wife and I used to save milk bottles against the day next week or the week after when that was the only way we'd be able to get food-- by trading in the milk bottles. And I did get a job writing art criticisms for the Cleveland News, now defunct, through no fault of mine. I mean it was many, many years after. And that became the primary thing I could count on, although it was a pittance really. And I always had a good many friends in . . . do you want to . . . shall we hold this? [INTERRUPTION]

HP: You were indicating that the market for you included portraiture and that some art criticism and friends . . . ?

MF: Oh yes.

HP: I wondered, had Cleveland had a tradition of supporting its local artists?

MF: Yes. You know . . . do you know the term the "May Show?" Actually, it's called the "Fourth Annual," or the "34th Annual Exhibition of Cleveland Artists and Craftsmen," something like that, and because it's held on May it's always called the "May Show." I think Cleveland has just about the oldest tradition for that kind of thing of any museum in the country, if not the oldest. I don't know of anybody older. And it was a rather important kind of encouragement for artists, also discouragement. But obviously the majority of people who got in would not sell, and the few who did couldn't live on the one or two things they did sell. But nevertheless it was a very conscientious effort to peddle paintings and sculptures, commissions of one sort and another, and fabrics, possibly even printing, I don't know . . . photography and so on. Other than that, the situation was very bad then for Cleveland as I guess it was in most smaller communities in that the commercial gallery situation wasn't very much. There were a couple of bookstores. Horner and Woods had a print gallery upstairs. And there was Rorimer Books which occasionally put on an exhibition. That's Jimmy Rorimer's father.

HP: Yes.

MF: And the Pottery Gallery, which was a kind of high-class arts and crafting shop where you could buy hand-engraved jewelry for women, and so on. Occasionally they would commission an artist, or show an artist, give him space to show watercolors and whatnot, primarily with the idea that their own particular clientele might be interested. But the chances to sell were very few. Although Cleveland wasn't by any means dead in that way, it was just extremely limited.

HP: Yes.

MF: And the taste of the times, I remember so well when I was the critic for the paper, was such that you could sell a stinking etching of Scottie dogs much faster than you could sell a Rembrandt unless it had a big name written all over it. I remember that Rockwell Kent was very popular according to the amount of stuff that was sold. I say very popular in that there were a number of people who were buying Rockwell Kent at the time. But it was very difficult to find anything, for example, by some of the more advanced, or even not so advanced painters. I remember that some people were interested in -- among my friends -- in George Grosz. This was before he came over here. I mean, just to drag a name out of somewhere, but I doubt whether you could have bought a George Grosz anywhere in that region. So the situation was pretty dismal, apart from the Depression, for artists and, if they got anything, it was through friends. Occasionally, as I say, somebody was able to show a few pictures somewhere. You just couldn't look for any real financial support. You had to either teach or do something outside.

HP: Is there a continuity of interest at the school among the students? Continuity of interest after you left the school?

MF: No really. I mean once you were done with the school, the school was done with you. I happened to be a little bit different. I don't know what the reason was, but with the work on the newspaper. Let me think, which preceded? The Cleveland Museum offered me a part-time lecturing job in '33, maybe that was to keep me from writing what I was writing in the paper. It was one way of getting rid of it, and No, some of my very dearest friends are still there. And with that I was also assigned from the Museum to teach at the art school, a kind of art history adapted for art students, who then, and I'm not sure about now, but I still suspect it's pretty much the same, couldn't care less about art history. What they wanted to know was how the hell you painted this or that in more or less technical terms. I remember the book that everybody tried to get hold of was called, I think, then

-- it's been reissued -- Secrets of the Old Masters or something like that, you see. But I don't remember that they were running around with magazines with up-to-the-minute art to find out what was going on in their own time. But that's partly, as I say, the whole environment, the whole school environment. The Museum was a good deal more progressive but even so the Cleveland Museum at that time was not what I would call a particular source of encouragement for the avant-garde. Today, it's different.

HP: Sure.

MF: So there were two kinds of things that . . . I'm getting off the main questions you asked. One, we had to scrounge around to keep living, to get enough money to live on. And if we wanted to know . . . The few of us who did want to know what was going on elsewhere in the world, we had to scrounge around for that because we couldn't see it in Cleveland. I remember in about 1932 or '33, Philip Johnson had just come back from Harvard as the fair-haired boy, and somehow through his sister, (as a matter of fact, I painted a couple of portraits for the Johnson family) we got together. I was then doing . . . in addition to my portraits, which were becoming progressively a dismaying kind of art to go into, I don't know whether you're interested in this, but my idea of the absolute abysm of art in the 20th Century is portrait painting as it's practiced for high society: I was doing stuff which is related to Cubism and stuff which was related to Kandinsky and Paul Klee and all the rest of it. I had done a good deal of this and Philip Johnson saw some of it and he read my pieces in the paper and he suggested we get together what we called a modern exhibition for Cleveland. I think that was almost the first time we had that sort of thing in Cleveland. And, needless to say, there was a good deal of commotion about it, especially at the Art School, where the kids were completely baffled by some of these things. So there was this other business of trying to keep alive physically and trying to keep alive -- if I can use an old-fashioned word -- spiritually. When the government came in with support for artists, I can't remember exactly the chain of events. First there was the PWAP, as I remember, Public Works of Art Project, and then there was the WPA: Works Progress Administration, or it may have been the other way around.

HP: No. You have it right.

MF: Or one may be part of the other. By this time, I say this in modesty but if you want me to report it, I'll report what happened. I was fairly well-known around town. I had been writing for three years in the paper, weekly, and at the outset I had a full page, and this is a pretty heady thing. By the way, as you can see from John Canaday and others, you're an absolute monarch and a whole lot of painters and gallery people, such as there are, would shamelessly toady around. That used to disgust me a little bit but I think I could understand it because I was in the same sort of situation. At any rate, I was fairly well-known around Cleveland because of my activities at the Museum, my activities teaching at the Museum, public lectures, radio work, and the newspaper, the Cleveland School of Art, and then I also started to teach at Western Reserve University. And what with one thing and another, we . . . First of all, let me see, what was the chain of events? There was the American Artists Congress, which is now I believe on the Attorney General's list . . .

HP: Yes.

MF: I think it's on the list, isn't it?

HP: I think so.

MF: I joined right away. I think it came around the time of the Spanish Civil War, which I then felt was a calamity, and I still feel is a calamity, and I made no bones about it at the time, even jeopardizing my position at the Museum. But Mr. Milliken, who was director all through my time at the Museum, was a fiercely dedicated man, dedicated, that is, to the idea that people are entitled to their own opinions, and of course he knew me intimately, he came to the house often, knew my family, saw my kids grow up and so on and so forth. And he knew what he was dealing with. And when he asked me whether I had political affiliations that weren't quite kosher, and I said, "No," he took my word for it, because he had no reason to think otherwise. He knew me too well. Nevertheless, I was on the executive board -- what was it? National Vice-President or some such thing of the American Artists Congress. I did resign when the Congress nationally condoned the Russian invasion of Finland, but I had already protested that they were making all sorts of decisions and statements and so on from New York without consulting the rest of the country and I didn't like it. I said, "Not that I necessarily take issue with you, but I don't think this is the democratic way to achieve these things, and if actually you just want numbers, count my number out. If you want exchange of opinion, that's another matter, but you're not doing it." Well, in those days, I don't know if you remember it well enough, perhaps you do, in those days that was enough to put you on one side of the fence rather than the other, you see. So presently there grew some dichotomies among whatever you can call this -- an artistic community. There never was a really close artistic community. I was very close to some people who since then have become, have got respectable places in art. There's Gus Peck, Augustus Peck, who for years was director of the Art School of Brooklyn Museum, he may still be for all I know. I haven't seen Gus for a long time. And there was Russell Limbach, Butch Limbach, who's up at Wesleyan, professor of art; he's been that for a great many years. And Bernard Freen who is now at Cooper Union, and I

suppose I can think of some others. We were fairly close at the time. And, oh, yes, there was Charlie Tudor, who became the first art director for Life Magazine. We were very close and we all of us were interested in a good deal more progressive attitude towards art. I remember we used to experiment with collages and montages and doing stuff on plaster in three dimensions. When I think of some of it now in relation to what we see today, I think what fools we were not to pursue it instead of just trying it and then dropping it. I used to make pictures with numbers, I still have them, which Jasper Johns is doing, you know, or was doing. They're not the same kind of thing but nevertheless the subject of my painting, the images on the paintings were numbers, numerals.

HP: More important is this whole feeling of experimentation.

MF: Right. And, as I say, it was pretty strictly a question of individuals because it was not in the air, and there was no place to do anything with it, you see. I don't believe I ever sold anything like that. Presently, I gave up the portraiture just simply because, I, as I said, just couldn't take it. If you're interested in one little anecdote, which you can throw out if you don't want it: A woman said, a woman aged about fifty, let's say, or fifty-five, "When you get to painting my chin and neck, wait until my daughter comes home on the Easter vacation, because I don't want you to paint it the way it is now. Mine used to be like hers and that's the way I'd like it"

HP: She wanted a composite.

MF: Yes. Well, there was one case where a woman told me so much what she wanted in her portrait, I said, "Look, I need the money and I'll paint the picture but I won't sign it. You can sign it if you want." And she had a good answer. She said, "I don't give a damn if you sign it or not; I'd like to have it the way I want it." So we were all satisfied.

HP: Yes.

MF: It wasn't a very good picture.

HP: Was she happy?

MF: She was happy. Just what she wanted! Well, anyway, with the government interest in art we were already on the way to the idea that Federal sponsorship of some sort was not only necessary but highly desirable. I still think it is, I still think it can be done without undue interference or dictation. I don't know why people have to be worse because they are on a Federal payroll than if they're on a big corporate payroll. They don't have to be any nastier or more conniving. And that became a very live issue, both through the American Artists Congress, through our own local activities and, again, I was pretty vocal about it. I used to make speeches under the sun. Well, somehow or other, when they were actually parceling out money to communities for art works, the committee that was formed for northeastern Ohio consisted of Henry Hunt Clark, who was then the director of the Art School; William Milliken, who -- I'm pretty sure I'm right -- was then director of the Museum; Mrs. Malcolm McBride, Lucia McBride, a wonderful woman who always helped artists and gave a great deal of comfort to all of us. My wife and I will never forget her; she's still living. I'm going to lecture in Cleveland on November 17th at the Museum and one of the people I asked to have at the dinner they're giving for old times' sake, is Mrs. McBride. And perhaps there was one other -- yes, there was a man whose name slips me at the moment, I believe, who was the art director of the Cleveland Public School System. And I was chosen to represent the artists' interests. So there were, I think, five of us. Our job was to think of projects, think of the artists who were to be hired to do them on a basis of the need and the money available, to award the thing on a provisional basis, see the sketches, hear the ideas, and then go ahead with the final award. I'm not sure about the order of events but I think before I was on the committee I was given two murals to do. It would seem a little fishy if I were on the committee and were given two murals to do after I was on. Somehow or other, the Cleveland public auditorium was only a few years old, it's an enormous building in which they had sports events and boat shows, and things like that, something like the Coliseum, and around the very top, just under the roof inside, there were sixteen or eighteen lunettes, I forget what -- eight or nine on either side, the long sides. The lunettes were each about eighteen feet long and about six or eight feet high at the center, and about six feet high at the edge, so they weren't just a section of a circle but the two ends were right angles and then an arc to join them. And we chose as the theme, Cleveland activities of one sort or another, so there were Cleveland schools, Cleveland sports, Cleveland bridges. I think when the first batch was awarded it was understood that we were all going to have two -- those who were involved. The first batch was awarded and then another choice of subjects was made for the second batch. And I remember they set aside some space in the lowest floor of the Cleveland stadium, which was also new and where the Cleveland Indians played their ball games, for us to paint. And we used to get out on the ball field when it wasn't too bitter cold, it was in winter, and used the diamond for relaxation. We'd pitch and run bases and things like that. But I remember it was a frightfully cold winter, one of the most miserable periods of my life, to get down to damp waterfront and work in a cold room, pretty much I would think near the freezing point. But we all worked with our canvases; there were about three to a room, almost alongside each other, you see, and it was quite a nice spirit of cooperation. We'd talk about each other's paintings, they were all quite different. I remember that I was assigned sports and the first thing that occurred

to me was that the things were up so high and so far away from anybody standing on the floor of the auditorium that if the mural was to be visible at all, probably the choice of color would be black and white. So I did do that. I had football, baseball and track, and I used the oval shape of the coliseum as a kind of theme, linear theme, it's sort of an oval shape in many different ways, running through the piece which was sort of sectioned off somewhat. The figures, however, were just plain black and plain white with a little bit of blending of the two at transition points, and the drawing was very simple. The other reason for determining that was that Cleveland, especially in that part of town, is very smoky from the steel plants, oil refineries, oil plants, chemical plants, and I knew the stuff would be covered with grime very quickly. I saw the murals not too many years ago and my two are the only ones you can see, which is not necessarily a good idea, but I had tried to persuade the others to take a similarly contrasting thing, not necessarily the black and white but to get rid of little, subtle, in-between tones, because I assured them they'd be lost, as they were.

HP: Well, had they had any experience in mural painting?

MF: No, none of us had. There was one fellow, yes, there was a man named Glen Shaw, who was a commercial artist as we used the term then, advertising and that sort of thing, and I'm not sure whether Glen was then teaching at the Art School, and if he was, whether it was full time or not. I think he was teaching there, but evenings or something of that sort. And he made, again, there's no use to be cagey about it, very academic sort of things which I thought were pretty dreadful. And his idea of a mural would be to have a well -- he did some for banks. He'd have a low . . . near the bottom of the picture there was a low horizon, a string of what appeared to be factories, squarish silhouetted buildings with smokestacks and then the whole vast area of the mural would be just wiggly lines of smoke going up. And he did something of that sort. He was one of the people who did not fit into this pattern I mentioned. Another person who did murals then -- it's funny, I can't remember them all -- was Clarence Carter who'd just . . . who still exhibits often and his style keeps developing and changing. He did some things which as I look back at them now were not unlike James Rosenquist's, but for a different reason. Clarence had schools and I remember he showed a whole school and then a closeup of a part, and then a hand writing with a big head somewhere. It was academic enough, I mean it was not as relentlessly chopped up as Rosenquist's pop art stuff is, but it was in the spirit somewhat and I remember very well how startled the jury was when he brought in his sketch. That was the most violent argument we had because they felt that this was a little odd for a public place and so on, and at one point finally I was very irritated and became very angry and I said, "Well, God damn it all, this is the only one including . . ." Yes, I was on the committee at the time. ". . . the only one including my own that's got any imagination and any guts. What are you throwing it out for? If you throw it out, I withdraw mine." I first had to announce that I was pleading now not as a jury member but as an artist. And I guess I must have frightened them because his went in and he got the second one, too. And I do think that if they weren't the best -- and I think they were the best of the whole bunch of them -- one of them, anyway, was. At any rate, there were lots of other things we assigned. There was some housing going on, public housing, and I remember that we constantly had the question which was becoming more and more rampant of social attitudes, encroaching Communism and all the rest of that stuff. And we had some pretty strong arguments in the committee on that. I remember there was somebody who had made a design for a mural to go in the recreation hall of a new housing project, which stood at the site of some of the worst slums in Cleveland, and over this door he had all sorts of workers and people laboring in broken-down houses, and so on, and then a great hand coming down in sort of a fist right over the door. And the jury this time was very much impressed with it and I said I thought it stank. I said, "Here, you've finally taken these people out of these wretched slums and gotten rid of the rats and the hovels they lived in and now you're going to make a picture of it in the new surroundings for what?" And I said, "This great fist coming down; I'd shudder before I went through the door. I'd try to go out through some other door." I thought it was totally inappropriate, and I made a very strong argument. Apparently there was some feeling about it too so that we asked him to change, so of course then there was inevitable charges of censorship and all the rest, and what startled the artists was the fact that I was the most vociferous on this, you see, the old defender of the artist's rights. But I insisted that a thing which had public use and furthermore was something for use at a time when people didn't want to be educated but just wanted to relax, and so on, could not be limited to the idle or not so idle but highly personal feelings of an artist. I wanted something of the Renaissance point of view. That is, you have a topic, you discuss it with people, you have a program, and so on, and it represents ideas commonly held for a specific purpose. I said, "I have no objection to the artist making this painting and exhibiting it wherever and I'll help him because I think it's damn good, but I don't think it's appropriate . . . it's a question of suitability, of appropriateness." On the other hand, I lost a battle. Somebody came in with a kind of a mural panel and in the bottom part a sort of solar disk and big radiations of rays of some sort or other, and I couldn't figure out what it was. Finally we called the artist and asked him to talk about it. And he said, "Well, that's the Statue of Liberty." And I said, "Where the hell do you see the Statue of Liberty there?" He said, "Well, it's as though . . . it's like you have an airplane and you're on top of it looking at the crown." I said, "Well, that's a hell of a way to show this. Why don't you look at it from underneath, look up the skirt?" Which wasn't a very nice thing to ask him, but I thought there, again, it was a national, a social symbol, and as such if he wanted it to register in an understandable way he must make it in some way which people recognized.

HP: Yes.

MF: If he wanted to make what he thought was an abstract pattern of it, God bless him, let him do it. But I didn't think it was appropriate. I mean that was the basis. Anyway, we bought paintings. We asked kids to do watercolors; we paid them for them. I'm not sure I know what the disposition of all that was. Some of it went to the Art Museum, some of it I think went into the school system for their traveling exhibition, their visual education department, some of it I'm sure is lying around somewhere untouched. But I can say from my own personal experience and from what I learned from looking into the subject elsewhere in the country that in Cleveland, as well as elsewhere throughout the country, I think it was the greatest shot in the arm that art ever had. I think that American art . . . I still think it was a tremendous thing for American art. Now, I was thinking of this again the other day in connection with the lecture which I have coming up, which has to do with . . . It's the fifth of a series of lectures on the history of American art, and I'm supposed to cover . . . the topic is the Postwar Explosion. The other day I was thinking maybe it wasn't such a good idea from the standpoint of art because what it did was to stop a strong streak in American art which Americans have always been afraid of until 1950 or thereabouts, 1945. People like Marsden Hartley and Stanton Macdonald-Wright and Morgan Russell, who has a show down at . . . Have you seen the show at Knoedler's?

HP: Yes.

MF: It's a knockout, it's an eye-opener!

HP: Marvelous! Yes.

MF: Well, I knew these people's work before. And then Arthur Dove, who used to put patches of overalls or shirts with cigarettes, which is what Rauschenberg is doing -- it's not Rauschenberg, I mean, but he was using . . . And this fantastic guy, Gerald Murphy: big pictures of safety matchboxes and stuff like that, and then Stuart Davis, and so on. And there was a tendency, as we know -- not a tendency, the regionalist and nationalist thing overwhelmed art I think in many places in the world but certainly in the United States, and of course, in Mexico in the '20's and '30's, and stopped this kind of thing. And it took something, perhaps the Europeans coming in the '40's from Europe during the war, when Leger and Masson and Tanguy and so on -- something finally chopped off this drive toward anecdotal painting, regional painting, and released again a very important strand of . . . aspect of American art which is what we have now. The other day I rather held that against these projects because it would have been impossible for anybody to do anything like a Gerald Murphy, if there had been anybody around, and get any sympathy from these committees.

HP: Yes.

MF: It just wasn't in the cards. You had the Frank Machauts and John Stuart Currys and, of course, Thomas Benton, and so on and so forth. So that it's a plus and a minus. It saved a lot of people, I mean it let them eat. I'm not sure when I look back on it now, and for the purposes of my lecture, whether in a . . . just in an abstract consideration, it set American art back. It sure brought out a lot of talent, though. Now I don't know if this is what you were asking or not.

HP: Yes. In an administrative sense, was your committee final? Or was there a question of sponsorship where you had to actually sell the mural, sell the wall space?

MF: To somebody else?

HP: In the sense that a public institution might itself have some subjective notion, suggestions, as to what it wanted on its wall?

MF: No. No.

HP: You just placed the mural? Chose the space itself?

MF: I can't tell you exactly how the spaces were chosen. That, for some reason or other, is a complete blank in my mind. All I know is that we had places where murals were going to be done. I rather think that it was some administration of WPA or PWAP which made these arrangements with other government agencies. Not so much the stadium or the . . . the stadium is where we worked, the Auditorium, but the house projects. They probably got in touch with the housing, whoever it was, and said, "Look, we'll get you some murals. Where do you want them?" But at that point, the choice of subject was entirely ours.

HP: For the committee?

MF: Yes. And there were set fees. As a mural painter, I was paid so much a week I think for eight weeks, that's about the way it went. It came close to three months on each one. I can't remember the figures. I suppose if I

started to scramble around among ancient documents I could find it but we were paid on a weekly basis and on the purchase of works I think we had certain broad categories. If you had a watercolor, that was so big you got so much, I mean it could be niggled to beat hell or it could be a couple of big, broad brush strokes this big. Well, the French tend to sell pictures that way, anyway. It's a #30 or it's a #50 landscape, and the choice was, as I recall I wouldn't have put up with it otherwise, I mean I wouldn't have stuck with it, was very fair. We tried not to play favorites. Anybody who had, in our opinion, some talent or had shown some talent at the May Show, even if it wasn't our opinion that he had talent, he'd been in several May Shows and wasn't a sheer dilettante, I mean, occasionally some advertising man would make a picture, or something like that, and particularly if we knew he needed money that counted pretty heavily. Altogether, I think it was about as disinterested a thing as I've ever been in.

HP: It sounds fairly strong in sense of direction and, you know, the adjustment. One of the things about the WPA I think was the wide variety of discretion allowed at the local areas.

MF: Yes. That is absolutely true. Nobody said a thing to us.

HP: Eddie Cahill, you may have seen him once or twice?

MF: No, I never saw him.

HP: That tells its own story.

MF: And in Cleveland particularly, it's a rather unusual community, or it was then. I don't know what it's becoming now; it's a long time since I've been there. We all knew each other pretty well and we respected each other pretty well and we liked each other. So that if I would say something stupid, Mrs. McBride would say, "Well, Milton, you don't exactly mean that, I'm sure you don't. Look, if so and so and so forth" Or I would say, "Well, Lucia, now this is the fourth time you've said this; you picked out this kind of thing, or so and so. Don't you think three is enough? I mean, let's keep it" We used to talk back and forth but we didn't have ulterior motives, you know, that I was trying to get my group of painters in, and somebody else was trying to get his group of painters, or I was trying to get the moderns and she was . . . or he was trying to get the conservatives or what not, we didn't have that sort of thing. Because we also knew the artists. I knew that the guy who was painting still lifes, which I personally loathed, had a family and was hard up and he had a right to live.

HP: Right. Right.

MF: And this is the way we went about it.

HP: Was the problem complicated by artists' organizations?

MF: Well, to a small extent, but not I don't keep that, I don't have that in mind as an important thing, and there again the reason is that it was, again, it was on such a close and personal basis. To begin with, I was rather closely tied up with an artists' organization myself. Most of the artists -- I say "most," there were exceptions -- trusted me. They may have thought I was a little nuts because I liked Clarence Carter's work, and the other critic, Grace Kelly on the Plaindealer thought that he wasn't any good; or because I wrote a long piece about Pascin, and nobody heard about Pascin and he was a lousy, neurotic painter anyway, and so forth and so on. But I think that on a personal basis they rather trusted me, you see. There were primarily in Cleveland two artists groups . . . Are you interested in this? . . . two artists's groups, I mean of organized artists, in the earlier days. There was the Cleveland Society of Artists, which I didn't like, because it represented the entrenched interests of art. They were the guys who in the latter part of the last century ran the salon and kept the Impressionists out, that same sort of thing. Of course, nine-tenths of them were half-baked Impressionists, I mean fifty years after the fact.

HP: Sure.

MF: But they represented the entrenched interests of art. They were the ones who gave the speeches to the Chamber of Commerce about the horrors of Picasso and of course, they were talking about Picasso thirty years before If they knew what he was doing at the time, they would have gone nuts. Then, on the other hand, there was a club called the Cocoon Arts Club and these were a lot of talented men but they were sort of the fly-boys of art. They liked . . . the biggest event for the Cocoon Club was their . . . did they call it, the Quatres Arts Ball, where they got the models to come in practically naked and they would unwind them in cakes and wind them up in cakes and the cops would sooner or later come around three or four o'clock in the morning and make a couple of arrests, and so on. However, their spirit was a good deal more dynamic in general. Often they did, the people I remember did things just to be different. I mean whether they knew what they were doing or not is beside the point; they wanted to be different. These two were sort of at loggerheads. The conservative one, of course, was pretty well-heeled and had a lot of friends. The other one was noisier and more attractive to people.

HP: You were in the midst of organization as part of the atmosphere.

MF: Yes. Well, I remember as an art critic, I reviewed the Cleveland Society of Artists Show one year and it was the dreariest thing in the world. It was held in the Terminal Tower Building -- we had one skyscraper. Do you know Cleveland?

HP: [Inaudible]

MF: And I was not quite as nasty as John Canaday can be in the paper. Did you read him last Sunday on Motherwell? It's not necessary; it's not nice and it's not necessary.

HP: No.

MF: But I did say . . . after looking through the show, I went to the window and saw the Valley with the freighters and tankers and oil and steel mills, and so on, and the thought just . . . I couldn't resist the thought, "There isn't any life behind me; the life is out there." On the other hand, I learned a great deal from the Cocoon boys because some of them -- a man named Phil Kaplan, who for years has been idea man and God knows what-all for a big public display firm here -- something Eisman? Hesel-Eisman? Hasel & Eisman? -- something like that -- things that move, things that shift, he was great for this kind of gimmickry. And from him and some of his friends, I first learned about Ezra Pound, for example. [INTERRUPTION]

HP: You were indicating the nature of social clubs and what it is you learned from the Cocoon Club.

MF: But from the Cocoon Club boys I learned things like . . . I first ran into the poetry of Ezra Pound, for example.

HP: Yes.

MF: I also saw for the first time illustrations by this idiot, Heinrich Ely, who made women disporting themselves with elephants. You know, all these things. What are you asking me for?

HP: Look, it's the intake that one has; it's the luggage that you pick up along the route. But for the Cocoon Club you might not have bumped into these.

MF: Well, I think sooner or later I would have . . .

HP: You might have.

MF: . . . because my education on art was curious, started . . . You remember I was deploring how I hadn't known anything about Renoir and so on. On the ship coming home, it was the Belgenland -- it no longer exists -- I met a man whose name was, I think Cook Glassgold. Do you remember that name, too?

HP: Yes.

MF: Well, what the hell am I talking -- why don't you just make this all up?

HP: Index of American Design.

MF: Yes. I haven't seen him since -- once or twice since then and that's all.

HP: Yes.

MF: His wife's a dancer. Sonja something. And he had some watercolors which, I don't know, he happened to show them to me one day on the ship, I don't know why, how we got into it, and things were a little offside, and the roofs were a little twisted, a mild form of abstraction. I said, "What do you do that for? Look at my drawings. I've got every brick drawn beautifully in the bridge at Montauban outside of the Angers Museum." On my trips in France and perspective, you could build the stuff from the preparatory drawings I made. I painted the watercolors very freely but the preparatory drawings were quite something. I still have a few of them and I'm still rather impressed with them. They weren't wooden and stiff but they were very accurate, even though selective, you know. I said, "Look at these and look at yours." So he started to explain to me why you distort things. This was the beginning. I really owe that man a lot and I don't know why I just sort of relegated him to the past. But I think if there's any curiosity or adventure in a person, he probably will come on it some way sooner or later.

HP: Stumble on it, yes.

MF: But this hastened it, let's put it that way. So the Cocoon Club, as far as I was concerned and some others in

Cleveland, was a thing that was just sort of a turmoil, a kind of a catalytic thing that made stuff bubble.

HP: Yes.

MF: Although, as I say, a lot of it was just . . . if you paint people, paint them walking on their feet, why not have them walking on their head sometime just because it's different, you see. Of course, there was a man named Paul Klee who did pretty well with it.

HP: How long did you remain with the WPA?

MF: Cleveland Museum?

HP: No, the WPA.

MF: Oh, that was just . . . Well, in which capacity, as a painter or as a jury man? As a committee person? As a painter just for the duration of the two murals. On the committee I can't answer, it just sort of petered out. I think the activities and the funds were cut back and we just stopped meeting. I can't remember when or how long.

HP: Well, it became an eddy, you know.

MF: Yes.

HP: The late '30's was a preparedness thing.

MF: Yes.

HP: The scene shifted.

MF: Well, I think if there had been somebody who had the time and the forcefulness to press, he might have been able to keep on getting funds. But I just don't know what happened to it; it just sort of petered out.

HP: Did it suffer any from what was going on in New York City?

MF: What, the WPA?

HP: Yes. The Artists Union . . . ?

MF: Well, I was going to mention it. The third, a later element of organization came in with the . . . Did we have the Artists Union or didn't we . . . ? I think there was a rather abortive Artists Union. I don't think the Artists Union ever really got going in Cleveland. There may have been one; I wasn't any part of it, but it was not a very forceful thing. I rather think that toward the end of the '30's there was a small group somewhere that called themselves the Artists Union. What their relation with New York was I don't know. I'm not certain about that.

HP: No. Well, in New York, you know, unionization was in the air nationally anyway.

MF: Yes. Yes.

HP: And the notion that artists, individualist people, would gain a kind of collective voice from banding together was a kind of unique form.

MF: Yes. Well, there was one sort of interesting attempt in Cleveland. This took place, however, in the '40's. We were either at war or just beginning; this was just about the beginning of the War. Wait a minute, we had already gone into the War because I had been appointed . . . the work at the Museum became more and more slack as we got into the War. Men never came around; kids began to be somewhat fewer, young men, and the idea of lecturing to six women in a class just didn't appeal to me after a while. And I persuaded Mr. Milliken to make one-half of my time available for ways that I would discuss with him in behalf of the war effort. And one of the things I was very much interested in, and I don't know how I got started on it, was a question of camouflage, or more accurately the protective concealment of what we called large-scale rear installations. I mean it's one thing to take care of a machine gun or a sniper or a truck near the warfront, it's another thing 5,000 miles away a great sprawling industry or a complex of hospitals, or a system of bridges. I mean you could drop a bomb on one, two bridges on the Cuyahoga River and tie up all the steel production just plunk right in the River and no ships can move in with their ore or no ships can come out with the steel. So this became a problem, especially since we knew, or it was guessed . . . I was then deeply involved in this and I had access to a lot of stuff that the Germans had prepared at that time, 7500-foot runways in Norway, that was knowledge. The guess here was that it was ordered for pinpoint attack on the United States, automobile plants, and airplane plants in Detroit, steel mills in Youngstown, and steel and automobile and machine tools, and so on, in Cleveland, Pittsburgh. And the thought was, as I say, this isn't artists any longer, this is the military brains of the country, that this would

probably be pinpoint bombing, that is, you send a guy over with instructions to knock out such and such a plant and if he didn't come back, too bad, but the very worst he can land as prisoner of war, I mean the next best he can land and become prisoner of war, or he could crash, whichever he wanted, as contrasted with what was called scatter bombing or the buckshot technique where you just drop thousands of bombs and something's got to hit something. But that wasn't feasible at that time over that long distance. It was from England to Germany but not from Norway to Detroit. And I was chairman of this committee for northeastern Ohio and we got off to a hell of a good start and became very well-known throughout not only Civilian Defense in Washington, but the Chemical Warfare Service and the Army and the Marine Corps and the Engineer Training School at Fort Belvoir, and so on. I was in and out of all those places constantly in the early '40's. Because I was convinced almost from the outset that smoke was the only answer. That's another story, I'm sure you don't want that. The whole theory of camouflage for that sort of thing, the pros and cons. But at any rate, because I had been in the Artists Congress, and because I had supported the Loyalists in Spain, and because I was a very ardent Roosevelt man, these all added up to a bloody red Communist, you see. And one of the men whose name I have already mentioned was dying to get this chairmanship of the Camouflage Committee. So he didn't miss any opportunity for doing what he could do, although it was mine already, you see. I'm trying to get back to my main story . . . we agreed amongst us, I don't remember who it was, that we would once and for all get as many Cleveland artists together as we could, those who were in any sense professional, and thrash out the problem of federal support and see if we couldn't make up a policy which would represent the artists of Cleveland. It was a pretty heroic thing to try. So the Art School agreed to let us use the auditorium and Mr. X was the leader of the opposition. He was against, and I was the leader of the pro. I was for federal support and we carefully prepared our case on our side, and he obviously did on his side. They pulled out all the stops about interference with personal rights and centralization and dictation from Russia, and all that nonsense. And we were trying to show that artists, if they were allowed to exist at all, were an asset in one of any number of ways to a community and that this had always been recognized by well-regulated communities and even badly-regulated ones because ultimately what the artist does trickles down even into commercial art and advertising and gives better sales potential and all the rest, you see. And that the artist, even though he happened to be painting abstraction and you don't happen to like abstraction, that doesn't necessarily mean he is therefore useless to you because the poster or the newspaper ad which leads you to buy a product and you make money on the stock of that product couldn't have been done without his work prior to it, you see. We built up all this sort of thing which does make sense, I mean we had historic backing. The other was just pure emotionalism. When it came time for me to speak, to take over my part of the meeting, I was introduced by Mr. X, the opponent had the floor at the moment. He said, "Now I turn the floor over to Mr. Fox," and he raised a clenched fist this way, you see. And it was kind of awkward. I said, "Well, we happen to be fraternity brothers," I said to the audience, ". . . and pledged to help each other unto death, and therefore I won't return the salute. If it were not for the fact that I like Mr. So-and-so and he is a fraternity brother of mine, I'd like to put that fist in his face outside, but for the moment we'll just let it go at that." And we were doing pretty well with our argument until one of my supporters, one of our panel, was going on great guns and he was talking about, "So what kind of a big deal is it if the government is willing to spend three billion dollars for art?" And somebody from the audience said, "It's three million." Whereupon he replied, "Well, three million, three billion, what's the difference?" Well, at this point I knew I was sunk. So the vote was against. But there was a great deal of steam up over this issue of whether the government should support art in some way and, if so, what that way should be. The whole thing came to . . .

HP: Also, it's still very much of an open problem.

MF: It's still very much of an open question and I still think it's a very serious question but I don't know anybody who's come up with a good solution because you have to start right away with the discussion of quality. Who is an artist? What kinds of things make a person eligible? You know, you can have a person do excellent work, which was already done more excellently, if one can speak that way, by Manet, and in 1965 I don't know what the hell for. On the other hand, some guy can stand on his head and I'm not sure that six months from now we will be completely indifferent to everything he did, including standing on his head. So it's very difficult.

HP: Yes.

MF: It's a problem that I think has to be settled sooner or later. I don't think that it's enough just simply to say, "Well, the artist will make out somehow or other." You see, at bottom I'm still on the side of the artists. I think some of the solutions are cockeyed. For instance, there was a drive if you remember at this time, and it came up several times, to have museums pay the artist a fee for exhibiting his work. The interesting thing about a lot of these notions is that as you have more experience you have to shift your focus. First I was a painter and the museum was the son of a bitch. Then I was a critic and the painters were sons of bitches. Then I went in for aesthetics and the critics were lousy. And each time you shift like this, well, I mean a big shift, you get a new perspective. And I know that museums could not afford . . . It's all right to say, "Well, the Cleveland Museum got \$34,000,000, why can't they give me four?" you know. We have the same thing in our books here. We do fifty or sixty books a year, which reproduce perhaps as many, depending on the books, but I make a conservative guess at 20,000 pictures. Museums say, "You should pay us. You're making money out of the books; you should pay us for the right to reproduce the picture." Private photographers want higher fees.

Common sense tells you if you have 700 or 1,000 pictures in a book and you have to pay, say, an average of, taking all the prices together, of ten bucks a picture, you've got \$10,000: 5,000 pictures, you've got \$5,000. Every item that goes into a book you have to multiply four times for the retail price . . . H: Sure.

MF: . . . because the bookstore's markup is twice, you see, forty to fifty percent. And then you have salesmen and you have shipping and bookkeeping and so forth, aside from overhead.

HP: Sure.

MF: So that a conservative way of doing business is to figure your . . . just your manufacturing cost. This has nothing to do with editorial and plate making, original plate making, and overhead, telephone, and secretaries, maintenance, and so on and so forth. Just the paper, the printing and the binding of a book: you take that figure and quadruple it and this tells you what your store price has to be. Now, under that reasoning, if we have \$5,000 to pay for photographs, that means we have to . . . and you buy, you have 5,000 books printed, that's a dollar a book; that means your book has to sell for four dollars more just to pay off all these swindlers for the privilege of reproducing the pictures. The European museums are not like this. The European museums for the most part -- not all -- but for the most part have what I think is a healthy and sane point of view. They say that these pictures are the property of people. The Louvre does not take fees. I know that there are funds even waiting for them which they've never picked up, because they are the property of the nation and according to curators -- I know people way up at the top -- they see no justification whatsoever in asking me or you or anybody else to pay the Louvre something for the privilege of reproducing something that belongs to humanity. The same is true in Italy. It's when you start to get closer to the Anglo-Saxon gambit that you run into trouble. There they begin the figure, "Well, if somebody is making millions of dollars, we are going to get thirty-five cents out of it."

HP: Yes.

MF: And you run into trouble. The American museums are going berserk on that. Unreasonable. Completely unreasonable. Which leads to one of two possibilities: one, you put the damper on adventuresome publication . . .

HP: Sure.

MF: . . . and two, what has already happened with us -- it drives us to look for our pictures elsewhere. So, big deal, the Toledo Museum doesn't get into our books; the Boston Museum as little as possible; the Met as little as possible, and so forth. We manage to find pretty good pictures. We're not boycotting them. I would crawl to get their pictures, but it's not economically feasible.

HP: Yes.

MF: And so if I can get a Petrus Christus from a private collector or from the Kunsthistorische Museum, which would do the job that the Met's will, or that the . . . I take that.

HP: Sure.

MF: Unfortunately. Once somebody at the Met -- when I said, "Well, is there no relief? Public relations and publicity value, you maintain a staff or public relations people, is there no value in this kind of thing? Our books go all over the world; people know about it." The answer was, "We already have a problem with too many people in the building." So I don't know how you figure it out. That's not part of this story, but . . .

HP: No, but you're right. This did emerge in the '30's. Artists and the Artists Union . . .

MF: The artists wanted rentals.

HP: Very much, yes. Interested in . . .

HP: And this was potential dynamite . . .

HP: Yes.

MF: . . . because the museums can't do it. I know the museum business. I was in it for twelve years and I've been very close to it. Some of my best friends are museum people. As you know, as most people know, when a bequest of money is left, it's generally hedged in with all kinds of provisions and so on, usually for the purpose of memorializing the donor. The room has got to be named after him, and each picture says, "Given by the sons and daughters and cousins and brothers and uncles of so-and-so and so on and so forth in conjunction with the fund of so-and-so -- another part of the family, you see." So you have Titian's name is like this, here, and the subject name is like this, here, and then this other thing strings out for four lines, you see. Nevertheless, they give the money for the purchase of works. I would guess that, of all the money given from funds and foundations

and privately to museums in this country, probably one one-hundredth of one percent, maybe a tenth of one percent -- let's be openhanded -- is for any other purpose than acquisition, by which I mean higher salaries for staff, more staff, publications, sponsorship of certain ideas which will lift the general artistic level of the community, both appreciatively or creatively. It's for buying pictures. And the artists never understand this. They say, "Cleveland got \$34,000,000 from Leonard Hanna. Why the hell can't they give me a hundred dollars? Is that going to hurt?" You know, just sort of simple-minded. But this is the way the argument runs and it was that sort of argument: "They're spending -- look at their budget -- they spend X million dollars to keep the Museum open a year, why can't they spend \$12,000 to pay rentals?" But you don't do business that way. How can you do it? Where is it going to come from? And that problem's never been settled. In some ways the artist is entitled to it, but just how it can be worked out I don't know.

HP: Well, it was easy to see why it emerged when it did emerge.

MF: Oh, yes.

HP: Yes. Then it depends upon whose ox is being gored when you shift the scene.

MF: Yes.

HP: It's like you putting on a new hat, moving to a new position, getting a new perspective.

MF: Yes.

HP: It's not easy.

MF: No.

HP: And most of the problems you've raised are, in some ways, unanswerable. It would depend upon the swinging time.

MF: Yes. I mean one could argue very eloquently on both sides.

HP: Sure.

MF: You can rebut it by saying, "Look, if you're never seen, your chances of selling something are practically nil. We are giving you a place to show."

HP: Right.

MF: That's one of the arguments of the museum, "It costs us money, we have to maintain the place, we have to hang it, we have to protect your work, all the rest of it, for what? So that people will see you work so there's a chance of buying it. Now you want us to pay you on top of that?" The other answers, "Well, you people are making your living out of the fact that you can display art works. You're displaying mine, Why can't I get something, too? I make the work; you only show it." Both arguments have merit.

HP: Sure.

MF: And how this will ever be resolved, I don't know.

HP: Well, your experience in Cleveland was -- illustrates different than any other experience I've had in that it was in a sense museum-centered, wasn't it?

MF: Quite definitely.

HP: Yes.

MF: I would say the only reservation I would make there would be the activities of the Cocoon Club, and that was just a fragmentary other center. They were in opposition to the Museum and in opposition to the prevailing taste and ideas of the Museum, but because they were interested largely -- well, now is it? -- the Shriners as to the Masons, you know, out for a good time while still doing something useful, I suppose.

HP: Yes. But the basic impulse was museum-oriented with Milliken . . . ?

MF: Right. Yes, yes. Milliken was an enormous influence on Cleveland's artistic life.

HP: Yes.

MF: Enormous.

HP: Yes.

MF: And he had his strong feelings and prejudices. It was often pointed out and I attacked the Museum for it myself, that there were no nudes in the collection. It wasn't only Milliken, it was some of his trustees, too.

HP: Well, that's not an easy problem to handle, you know, direct

MF: Yes. Especially when you have . . . you see, there again artists, myself included when I was on the outside, never think about things like that. When you have thousands of school kids going through a museum, now even today . . . and we say things Although times have changed, even today I would hesitate before I brought kids into some rooms of art. Why? Not because I'm a prude, but I do think that there is a certain propriety of timing, but more important, I guarantee you that even today the surest way to break up a class, its concentration and I won't say morale because that has moralistic overtones -- just to disrupt it, a class of boys and girls of twelve or thirteen in an art talk is to start throwing nudes on the screen. They begin to titter and nudge each other and so then the whole direction of interest changes. Because there are kids, these are things they are curious about, suddenly they're looking at naked women and to hell with your painting problems, or can I see a man's member under the jock strap, you know? And that's a problem. But nevertheless, since on the other hand the nude, and particularly the female nude, is one of the staples of art history, I always felt and still feel that you have to face this problem with kids, but it shouldn't be done at the cost of distorting art history and what artists really do. I always thought that was a bad policy.

HP: Well, Milliken largely set the taste of the Museum in that there was continuity?

MF: Yes. He was very influential and, as I say, he had his preferences and shortcomings but I still think he was one of the best museum directors that I ever knew of.

HP: He had a sense of service to the community.

MF: Ah, but he had also a scope.

HP: Yes, yes. And deep touch?

MF: He had service to the community, a sense of the terrific importance of this Museum. I saw him countless times pick up cigarette butts on the sidewalk in front of the Museum because he thought a museum should be in itself a lovely thing, a beautiful thing in a lovely surrounding. He was instrumental in having the Garden Club locate itself just below the Museum, making use of the pond that was there, Wade Pond, and make beautiful gardens which then became kind of a baroque vista leading to the Museum. That was all Milliken. And he used to even go and pick up -- we didn't have Kleenex's then -- bits of paper that were in the bushes, blown into the bushes in the garden. He lived right adjacent to it and this is the way he spent his time because the Museum was something precious and it was precious for one thing -- for Cleveland people. It was a fanatical devotion and excellent taste, especially in areas which were not always popular with other museum people. He built up a great medieval and Romanesque, you know, all that stuff, the Guelph Treasure, and so on -- not so much Byzantine -- but that area.

HP: Yes.

MF: I mean he was extremely sympathetic with the Oriental, although I don't think he really cared much or paid much attention. I mean it didn't mean a lot to him personally. This is why Cleveland has always had an excellent Indian department and very good Japanese and Chinese. Of course, it was Sherman Lee who was a fanatic about that -- it's become one of the most important centers I think anywhere.

HP: Yes.

MF: Sherman did our book on the history of Far Eastern Art. The one place where Milliken fell short was in things going on around him. The Museum had almost none of that. And even now it's hard because it isn't only Milliken, it's the trustees. They're looking for one thing, they look for investments -- is this thing going to be -- what's it going to be worth twenty years from now? Or is your money going to be worth what you put in it twenty years from now? Let time test it a little bit and so forth.

HP: Yes. Well, that's not an easy road for anyone to walk, being director of a museum, you know.

MF: Oh, no.

HP: It's not easy at all.

MF: Also, he was, I think, a real -- I won't say a pathfinder -- but he was really right up there in front with people in the function of the Museum in art education. He insisted that kids had to come there, that we had to go out to

the schools with lecture boxes, slide boxes and so on. I think Cleveland has one of the most impressive records for that, with a little footnote to the effect that everybody was so proud of the tremendous number of kids, of the numbers on the turnstile that one guard there, if he didn't feel enough kids came along with a class, he would give the turnstile a few real good spins and ring up an extra thirty-five or fifty, you see, because I mean there was a goal, there was an ideal there of service and if it didn't actually add up, why he'd help it.

HP: It's part of the electricity.

MF: Yes. It was a very dynamic -- it still is, but it was museum-oriented.

HP: Yes, That is, there was plenty of past so that when the Depression came along, this was an existing institution with a tradition.

MF: Right. Right. I think by the same token, that if the Museum under Milliken and under Rossiter Howard before him -- and this would have been unusual in those days -- were more aggressive in showing recent art, I mean the contemporary art of the time, I think there would have been a noticeable change, a difference in Cleveland art at the time.

HP: Yes. Yes.

MF: I don't think there's any question, I mean it's always this give-and-take business. There was absolutely no reason in the world why I, a scholarship student, should go off to Europe and not know the name Renoir, or Cezanne, in 1925.

HP: No, none. Right. That is odd.

MF: Of course, the dopes we had on the Art School faculty

HP: Well, you know, that's an unfolding

MF: Yes.

HP: You have already indicated that art education is a continuous thing, you know. Cook Glassgold.

MF: Yes. I remember one teacher in Art School who explained Matisse this way: He leaves the painting where I start. I make these ragged outlines and then I go on and paint, but Matisse calls this a painting. [END OF INTERVIEW]